

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application including that of the Examiner's amendment:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method for processing calls to a directory access server, comprising:

intercepting a call from a client computer to a directory access server, the call consisting of one of a request to add data to a directory associated with the directory access server, a request to modify data in the directory, and a request to delete data from the directory, the call further including at least one attribute associated with data having a data content and a data structure;

evaluating the attribute according to a first rule governing data content that is permissible to be forwarded to the directory access server and a second rule governing data structure that is permissible to be forwarded to the directory access server;

the first and second rules including a data addition rule when the call includes a request to add data to the directory;

the first and second rules including a data modification rule when the call includes a request to modify data in the directory;

the first and second rules including a data deletion rule when the call includes a request to delete data from the directory;

determining whether the attribute complies with the first rule and the second rule;

forwarding the call to the directory access server if the attribute complies with the first rule and the second rule; and

rejecting the call to the directory access server and forwarding an error message to a source of the call if the call attribute does not comply with the first rule and the second rule,

said steps of evaluating the attribute and determining whether the attribute complies with the first rule and the second rule being performed by an attribute rule enforcer interposed between the directory access server and the client computer.

2-13. (Cancelled).

14. (Currently amended) An attribute rule enforcer, comprising:

a rule validator and a transaction monitor, the rule validator and transaction monitor being interposed between a client computer and a directory access server;

the transaction monitor being capable of intercepting a call from a client computer to a directory access server, diverting the intercepted call to the rule validator if the call includes one of a request to add data to a directory associated with the directory access server, a request to modify data in the directory, and a request to delete data from the directory, and being further capable of forwarding the intercepted call to the directory access server if the call does not include one of a request to add data to the directory, a request to modify data in the directory, and a request to delete data from the directory; and

the rule validator being capable of determining whether an attribute of the call complies with a first rule governing content of data that may be permissible to be forwarded to the directory access server and a second rule governing structure of data that is permissible to be forwarded to the directory access server, the first and second rules including a data addition rule when the call includes a request to add data to the directory, the first and second rules including a data modification rule when the call includes a request to modify data in the directory, the first and second rules including a data deletion rule when the call includes a request to delete data from the directory;

the rule validator being further capable of forwarding the call to the directory access server if the attribute complies with one of the first rule and the second rule and being further capable of rejecting the call to the directory access server and returning an error message to a source of the call if the attribute does not comply with the first rule and the second rule.

15. (Cancelled).

16. (Previously presented) The attribute rule enforcer recited in claim 14, wherein the rule validator is capable of forwarding the call to the transaction monitor, and the transaction monitor is capable of relaying the call to the directory.

17. (Cancelled).

18. (Previously presented). The attribute rule enforcer recited in claim 14, wherein the rule validator is capable of forwarding the call to the directory access server.

19-24. (Cancelled).

25. (Currently amended) A directory network, including:

one or more client computers;

a directory access server, said directory access server being capable of controlling access to a directory associated with the directory access server, and

an attribute rule enforcer, said attribute rule enforcer comprising:

a rule validator and a transaction monitor, the rule validator and transaction monitor being interposed between a client computer and a directory access server;

the transaction monitor being capable of intercepting a call from a client computer to a directory access server, diverting the intercepted call to the rule validator if the call includes one of a request to add data to a directory associated with the directory access server, a request to modify data in the directory, and a request to delete data from the directory, and being further capable of forwarding the intercepted call to the directory access server if the call does not include one of a request to add data to the directory, a request to modify data in the directory, and a request to delete data from the directory; and

the rule validator being capable of determining whether an attribute of the call complies with ~~the~~ a first rule governing content of data that is permissible to be forwarded to the directory access server and a second rule governing structure of data that is permissible to be forwarded to the directory access server, the first and second rules including a data addition rule when the call

includes a request to add data to the directory, the first and second rules including a data modification rule when the call includes a request to modify data in the directory, and the first and second rules including a data deletion rule when the call includes a request to delete data from the directory;

the rule validator being further capable of forwarding the call to the directory access server if the attribute complies with one of the first rule and the second rule and being further capable of rejecting the call to the directory access server and returning an error message to a source of the call if the attribute does not comply with the first rule and the second rule;

the attribute rule enforcer being arranged in the directory network so as to intercept calls from the one or more client computers to the directory access server, said attribute rule enforcer being interposed between the one or more client computers and the directory access server.

26. (Cancelled).